in consultation Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has formulated a scheme for enhancing productivity and competitiveness of khadi industry and artisans by overhauling repairing and renewal of spinning/ weaving and allied equipment, replacement of obsolete equipment in operation with 200 of the best performing khadi institutions registered with KVIC, setting up service centres, product and design development, capacity building of artisans as well as khadi institutions. This scheme has the principal objective of upgradation of quality of khadi products for domestic market as well as external market.

(b) The scheme is proposed to be implemented over a period of five years and after the complete implementation of the scheme, around 24,000 new employment opportunities are expected to be added to the existing 8.68 lakh persons employed in the khadi sector.

(c) To increase the production of khadi in the country, including rural and tribal areas, and make khadi products competitive in the global economy, Government (in the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries) has been implementing schemes like Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate scheme (ISEC) providing subsidized rates of interest on bank loans, Product Development, Design Intervention and Packaging (PRODIP) Scheme for improving designs and packaging of khadi products and Rebate Scheme for providing rebate on sales of khadi through KVIC. Assistance is also provided to khadi institutions by KVIC to participate in exhibitions at the national, sub-national levels to assist marketing of khadi products. Further, the Government has launched the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) to develop 100 clusters (25 khadi, 50 village industries and 25 coir clusters) over a period of five years beginning 2005-06. SFURTI envisages assistance for setting up of common facility centres, quality improvement, training and capacity building, development of new products, improved packaging, new design, market promotion, etc.

Import of Potassic Fertilizers

1212. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS toe pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering import of large quantities of potassic nutrients this year to meet the domestic shortfall;

(b) whether Government have proposed that all future imports of DAP and MOP would be canalized through PSU companies than to let the fertilizer companies to import the same directly; and

(c) whether this proposed canalization of fertilizer imports is likely to make prices of fertilizers cheaper for farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) The entire requirement to potash is met through imports as there are no exploitable reserves of potassic fertilizers in the country. The total import of MOP during the current year (up to 23.02.2007) was 30.40 lakh MT.

(b) The imports of all fertilizers except urea are freely allowed. However, Government is paying concession on the sales of imported DAP & MOP under the Concession Scheme for decontrolled P&K fertilizers. Government is exploring the possibilities to import these fertilizers through PSU companies to ensure timely availability of these fertilizers at the most competitive prevailing international prices.

(c) The Phosphatic & Potassic fertilizers (except SSP) covered under the Concession Scheme are sold to the farmers at uniform indicative Maximum Retail Prices throughout the country irrespective of prices of these fertilizers in the international market.

New Pharma Policy

1213. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the new draft pharmaceuticals policy contains how best to protect the interests of consumers by providing drugs at reasonable prices;

(b) whether it is a fact that pharma companies are against price control system for drugs; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to face the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) Draft National Pharmaceuticals Policy-2006 was prepared by this Department after extensive discussions with various stakeholders including drug industry